

BEETHAM PARISH COUNCIL NEWSLETTER
ISSUE No 43 **APRIL - JUNE 2021**

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The parish seems to have escaped serious flooding over the winter, but the problem has not gone away and we must use the summer to urge progress on defences against future dangers. As with many other issues, progress seems to have been adversely affected by the Covid pandemic. The remote public meeting on 6 April 2021, organised by CCC and the Environment Agency, attracted a good attendance and set out plans for dealing with some aspects of the problem. A further public meeting later this year may tell us more, but actual work to implement these plans has not yet materialised. We have to hope that it is at least underway before the winter of 2021/22.

The cost of tree management continues to dominate the parish council's budget. With literally hundreds of trees on parish land, controlling their growth is occupying more parish council time and consuming increasingly significant amounts of cash. Priority must, of course, be given to those trees which represent a danger, or potential danger, both to people and to property, and professional specialists are employed to advise on and deal with these priorities. Enclosing the two sizeable plots of parish council-owned land, at Slackhead and at Sandside, are often boundary fences or walls and these too require regular attention – and consequent expense. How these problems are resolved may call for flexibility and imagination, taking into account the interests of all parties.

The old Slackhead refuse tip continues to cause concern. This is not owned by the parish council but recent leachate of previously abandoned materials, certainly unsightly and possibly toxic, has been drawn to the attention of CCC as the responsible authority. An inspection has been carried out and samples taken for assessment although more may be needed after heavy rain, when the problem is at its worst. The parish council continues to urge early remedial action.

Traffic speeds and public safety are always uppermost in the minds of parish councillors. Speeds on the A6 at Beetham and the B5282 at Sandside/Carr Bank are a constant worry. Modern technology provides new methods of dealing with this and the parish council would like to try to reduce traffic speeds by installing Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) at key points on these roads. Unfortunately, many of the worst affected and preferred sites are unacceptable to the Police Authority for a variety of reasons. Alternative locations are being sought and the use of a (borrowed) hand-held speed gun is being negotiated. The north-bound bus stop on the B5282 at Carr Bank is a prime danger spot. The concreted waiting area is no longer large enough for the number of waiting passengers (made worse by Covid-related social distancing regulations) with school children being forced to stand on the grass verge or in the road. Thankfully CCC are taking this problem seriously and have agreed to extend the concreted area.

Local residents will be aware of the continued closure of The Ship Inn at Sandside. The owners assure us that this is necessary for major repairs/improvements and that serious investment is underway to ensure the future of this important facility for both local residents and visitors.

At the Annual Meeting of the parish council in May Cllrs Steve Yates and Margaret Knowles took over as Chair and Vice-chair respectively. Following the recent resignation of Cllr Bob Pickup, there is now a casual vacancy on the parish council to cover the next two years; those interested in applying for this position should contact the Parish Clerk as soon as possible.

Normal face-to-face PC meetings have now resumed. Members of the public are always welcome.